



NEWS RELEASE

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PAPUA NEW GUINEA INDEPENDENCE:

EXCHANGE OF MESSAGES

The following are the texts of messages exchanged yesterday by the Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam, and the Chief Minister of Papua New Guinea, Mr Somare, agreeing that arrangements be made for Papua New Guinea to become independent on 16 September 1975:

CHIEF MINISTER'S MESSAGE TO THE PRIME MINISTER

"My Dear Prime Minister,

On 18th June 1975 the House of Assembly passed the following motions:

"That the following Resolution passed by the House of Assembly on 9th July 1974 be rescinded - 'That this House resolve that Papua New Guinea do move to independent nation status as soon as practicable after a Constitution has been enacted by this House and that any proposed date for independence is to be endorsed by this House' ", and "That this House now nominates the 16th day of September 1975 as the date upon which Papua New Guinea is to achieve independence".

I gather steps will be taken to pass the Independence Act in the Australian Parliament citing the above date.

Yours sincerely,

M.T. Somare  
(Chief Minister)  
19 June, 1975

PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE TO THE CHIEF MINISTER

"Mr Michael T. Somare,  
Chief Minister of Papua New Guinea  
Port Moresby

My Dear Chief Minister,

Thank you for your message of 19 June 1975 informing me that on 18 June 1975 the House of Assembly nominated 16 September 1975 as the date upon which Papua New Guinea is to achieve independence.

The date nominated by the House of Assembly is acceptable to the Australian Government. I confirm that steps will be taken to pass the Independence Act in the Australian Parliament citing the date of 16 September.

May I offer you my congratulations on the historic decision which the House of Assembly has taken and express to you my profound admiration for your success in steering Papua New Guinea to full nationhood. I look forward to continuing close co-operation between our two Governments and our two nations.

I take this opportunity to reaffirm to you that the Australian Government's policy is that Papua New Guinea should come to independence on 16 September as one country, in accordance with the wishes of the overwhelming majority of Papua New Guinea's elected representatives. The Australian Government will give no sympathy, aid or support in any form to any group in Papua New Guinea working to undermine their country's unity. In accordance with our obligations to the United Nations, the Australian Government has a responsibility to the people of Papua New Guinea to help them ensure that on independence day they are citizens of a strong and united country.

I am arranging for the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the Trusteeship Council to be advised of your decision and the Australian Government's agreement that Papua New Guinea is to achieve independence on 16 September 1975.

Yours sincerely,

(E.G. Whitlam)  
19 June 1975"